

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Ballet Dances Off the Stage

Ann Haskins · Wednesday, March 13th, 2019

Dancing about in a Japanese Garden in Long Beach, Cuban contemporary dance in Irvine, two ballet classics in Glendale, a new dance festival in Hollywood, a dance festival's adieu in Santa Monica, and more SoCal dance this week.

5. Waltzes and torrents from Cuba

Cuba may be better known for its ballet dancers, but the vibrant Cuban contemporary company **Malpaso Dance Company** under director Osnel Delgado has attracted top international contemporary choreographers and arrives for performances at two local venues. This week's program includes *Waltz* by Canadian choreographer Azure Barton and *Face the Torrent* by Sonya Tayeh. Irvine Barclay Theatre, UC Irvine, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine; Wed., March 20, 8 p.m., \$48-\$57. <http://www.thebarclay.org>. Also at Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Bram Goldsmith Theater, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills; Thurs.-Sat., March 28-30, 7:30 p.m., \$35-\$105. <http://thewallis.org>.



Malpaso Dance Company. Photo by Bill Hebert.

4. Week two of a festival's long good-bye

Over the past seven years, more than 75 emerging choreographers and dance companies have been presented in Highways' recurring series New Shoes. The series is concluding, but going out with a four-week bang as **Best of New Shoes**. Curated by Highways Artistic Director Patrick Kennelly, each week showcases four choreographers who are alumni of the series. This week two (March 15-16) offers Julianne Mackey, Samantha Mohr, Sophia Stoller and Emily Meister/Liz Bustle. Week three (March 22-23) presents Heidi Brewer, Keith Johnson, Darrian O'Reilly, and Rebecca Pappas. The final week (March 29-30) belongs to Yanina Orellana, Jordan Saenz, Carissa Songhorian, and Lara Wilson. Highways Performance Space, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Fri.-Sat., thru Sat., March 30, 8:30 p.m., \$25, \$20 students & seniors. <https://highwaysperformance.org>.



Best of New Shoes. Photo courtesy of Highways Performance Space.

3. A new festival "moves" in

A new dance festival arrives as Break the Floor Productions and the Montalbán unveil the long-

planned *Moves at the Montalbán* with each show featuring a winner of the Capezio A.C.E. Award for outstanding emerging choreographers. Friday is contemporary choreography with Marissa Osato and Will Johnston's **Entity Company**. Saturday belongs to tap with Nick Young's troupe **Rhythmatic**. Contemporary choreography returns on Sunday with choreographer **Lukas McFarlane**. The Montalbán Theater, 1615 Vine St., Hollywood; Fri.-Sat., March 15-16, 8 p.m., Sun., March 17, 5 p.m., \$40-\$65. 323-461-6999, <https://www.themontalban.com/moves-at-the-montalban>.



Entity Contemporary Dance in Moves at the Montalbán. Photo courtesy of the artists.

2. Last chance for a Serenade and Sylph from two Mr. B's

L.A.'s own professional classical ballet company closes its season with a 20th century George Balanchine classic that defined New York City Ballet and a 19th century August Bournonville story ballet that defines Denmark's Royal Danish Ballet. The choices reflect the deep roots **Los Angeles Ballet**'s artistic directors have with both the two choreographers and their companies. Colleen Neary danced with NYCB where Balanchine personally selected her to stage his ballets which she does for major ballet companies all over the world. This time L.A. gets the benefit of her gifts with *Serenade*, the first ballet Balanchine created after arriving in the U.S. Thordal Christensen's roots are with the Royal Danish Ballet where he trained and had a stint as artistic director with the company where Bournonville created both the fleet Danish ballet style and his signature work *La Sylphide*. A taut two-act tale, *La Sylphide* follows a Scottish aristocrat who abandons his own wedding festivities to follow an entrancing woodland sprite, a Sylphide, while at the same time he is being pursued by a vengeful witch. Neary may be the Balanchine expert, but she shows her character chops as the ferocious and manipulative witch. Both ballets put the strong LAB corps deservedly in the spotlight for their exquisite ensemble dancing, a recognized hallmark of a classical ballet company. Alex Theatre, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale; Sat., March 16, 7:30 p.m. \$36-\$104, 310-998-7782, <http://www.LosAngelesBallet.org>.



Los Angeles Ballet's "La Sylphide". Photo by Reed Hutchinson.

1. Ballet steps outside the proscenium

Taking dance off the proscenium stage, Melissa Barak and her contemporary ballet company **Barak Ballet** launch *Off Balance*. The debut program includes new works by Barak and, SFDanceworks associate director Danielle Rowe with a guest appearance by San Francisco Ballet principal dancer Sarah Van Patten. Collaborators for the experimental endeavor include Susan Narduli and Sebastian Peschiera whose Narduli Studio explores the intersection of art, architecture, technology and public space, composer David Lawrence, violinist Heather Powell, and multi-media artist Alisa Lapidus. Info about the series at <https://barakballet.org>. The Edye Theater at the Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica; Sat., March 16, 8 p.m., Sun., March 17, 2 & 6 p.m., \$45. <https://www.artful.ly/store/events/16985>



Barak Ballet. Photo by Dave Friedman.

Other dance of note:

Choreography from four MFA candidates share the stage in various configurations under the banner *Hemispheres: A Mixtape*. Works by **Cruz** and **Manuel “Manny” Macias** comprise the program on Thursday and Saturday evenings while **Temria Arimet** and **Gen “Reagan” Li**’s works get the spotlight on Friday evening and Saturday matinee. Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater, Cal State University Long Beach, 6200 E. Atherton St., Long Beach; Thurs.-Fri., March 14-15, 8 p.m., Sat., March 16, 2 & 8 p.m., \$20, \$16 seniors & students. 562-985-7000. <http://www.csulb.edu/dance>, <https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/dept/1174/1551416400000>.



CSULB Dance “A Mixtape”. Photo by Gregory RR Crosby.

Tucked away on this state university campus, a Japanese garden becomes the stage for *GardenMe*. The dance performance by **Kanna Kai Jones** and **VIDA (Vannia Ibarguen Dance Arts)** is augmented by video projections, soundscapes and the chance to stroll the garden with gates open at 7 p.m. before the dancing begins at dusk. Warm clothes and comfortable shoes are advised. Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden, Cal State University Long Beach, Earl Warren Dr., Long Beach; Wed., March 20, 7 p.m., Reservations at \$10, free for children under 18. Reservations at 562-985-2169, JGMembership@csulb.edu.



Kanna Kai Jones in “GardenMe”. Photo courtesy of the artist.

The performers who populate **Stomp** may essentially be percussionists, but they also know how to move as they celebrate the infectious potential in everyday objects to make noise that becomes rhythm and music. The current touring version of the long-running popular show arrives for two performances. Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 18000 Park Plaza Dr., Cerritos; Sat. March 16, 3 & 8 p.m., \$70-\$90. <http://www.cerritoscenter.com>.



Stomp. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Gregorian chants, Argentine tango and the explosive contemporary “gaga” technique credited to choreographer Ohad Naharin come together in Naharin’s *Venezuela*, the calling card for next week’s visit by Israel’s **Batsheva Dance Company**. The company’s Westwood performance is preceded by a screening of *Mr. Gaga* in Hollywood this week with Naharin present for a Q&A. As of press time reservations for the March 14 screening were limited to the wait list. Tickets for the performances are still available. *Mr. Gaga* at Temple Israel, 7300 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Thurs., March 14, 7 p.m., free with reservation. <https://www.tioh.org>. *Venezuela* at UCLA Royce Hall, 10745 Dickson Ct., Westwood; Fri.-Sat., March 15-16, 8 p.m., \$29-\$89. <https://cap.ucla.edu>.



Batsheva Dance Company. Photo courtesy of the artist.

A harbinger of 2019 centennial activities celebrating the life and legend of the late modern dance choreographer **Merce Cunningham**, *Clouds and Screens*, includes two large works by Andy Warhol and Charles Atlas, both artists associated with Cunningham’s company. The installation also includes two early videos of Cunningham’s work with performances and more to come during the exhibition’s run. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Hancock Park; Thurs.-Tues., thru March 31, \$25, \$21 students & seniors (museum admission). http://www.lacma.org/event/memprev_merce2.



Merce Cunningham. Photo by Jack Mitchell courtesy of Getty Images.

Note to readers: In keeping with the growing activity surrounding the **Cunningham Centennial**, LA Dance Chronicle is providing a place for individuals who worked with Merce Cunningham, saw his work or otherwise just want to say something about Merce Cunningham to participate in the Centennial remembrance. L.A. Dance Chronicle founder Jeff Slayton danced with Cunningham's company and championed the idea of a place individuals could post a remembrance or comment about Merce Cunningham, his dance works or his legacy. The **Cunningham Centennial Page** now is live at the website (<http://LADanceChronicle.com>). Comments will be collected and passed on to the Cunningham Trust.

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